



Climate Change Tribal Student Photo Contest

Mentor Guide: Documenting a Resilient People, a Resilient Culture

Snapshot

The photo contest allows students to identify cultural, economic, physical, ecosystem, and other vulnerabilities in the world around them through the lens of climate change. At a minimum, students will get a chance to take photos of their world and, depending on their age, use the photograph caption to link what they value in the image to climate vulnerabilities for that resource, practice, or even people they love. Older students may be able to identify actions they or others can take to make a vulnerable resource more resilient or to find alternatives to address climate change impacts expected for their area.

Preparation and Materials:

- Determine a distribution, sharing system for school cameras. Highlight that students can use personal cameras/phones when they don't have access to a classroom camera.
- Chose an age appropriate level of detail for a climate change primer (examples on back).
- Basic Camera operation, off site (if allowed) camera security, what makes a good photo (example on back).
- Test upload process, file naming protocol, and folder system. Students with these skills and internet access can upload on their own.

Objectives—Students will be able to:

- Identify what they value in the world around them (appropriate cultural traditions and messages can be incorporated here);
- Identify how a changing climate might affect things that they value and how the community is working toward solutions. (Younger children may understand how climate change affects their favorite natural places, guided older students may identify how actions can reduce the effects of climate change - bigger culverts on roads avoids a washout, if storms are bigger than in the past.)
- Identify that photos can tell stories and that the caption can further help the viewer to understand that story of the subject in the photo.

Vocabulary:

Climate change, value, temperature, storms, sea level rise, vulnerability, resilience, connections, traditional knowledge, adaptation, innovation, responsibility, air pollution, clean energy, culture

Procedure:

- Introduction of contest and the link between climate change and the values (people, resources, traditions) they or the community holds dear. (*15 minutes*)
- Introduce cameras or discuss ways to take pictures with own devices, demonstrate use, basic picture framing, subject, background, lighting (*10 minutes*).
- Upload process, file labels, group or individual submissions, example climate captions
- Close lesson, rules for camera security and sharing system (if school providing devices)



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Effective Climate Change Communications

Studies have demonstrated that people, especially children, may feel alarmed, ambivalent, distant, or overwhelmed with climate change. It's important to keep your message simple, personal, relevant, and positive, focusing on the benefits of taking simple actions now towards a better future with even more opportunities to act in ways that build community momentum towards solutions over time.

Helpful Resources:

- [15 Steps To Create Effective Climate Communications](#)
- [The Psychology of Climate Change Communications](#)
- [To Build a Better Future, We Must Imagine Ourselves There](#)
- [National Climate Assessment Overview – Indigenous Peoples, Lands, and Resources](#)
- [Tribal Nations in the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit](#) (Six strategies with stories)

Selecting a Climate Primer

Interactive tools that introduce students to climate change are often most effective. Many federal, state, Tribal and local agencies and groups have developed useful primers. You only need review one or two to get a good overview for a short, pointed, age-appropriate lesson plan to provide context for the climate photo contest exercise to tie the new knowledge to their home.

Helpful Resources:

- [NASA Climate Kids](#)
- [NOAA Teaching Climate](#)
- [EPA Lesson Plans for Educators](#)
- [NPS Exploring Climate Science](#)
- [NGEO Facing Climate Change](#)
- [Suquamish on Ocean Acidification](#)
- [NASA Resources for Educators](#)
- [UNEP TUNZA Climate Change Issue](#)
- [EPA Student's Guide to Global Change](#)
- [ACE For Teachers – Our Climate Our Future](#)
- [G-WOW – Changing Climate, Changing Culture](#)
- [USGCRP Climate Literacy Essentials](#)
- [Cycles – Teachers Discovering Climate Change from a Native American Perspective](#)

Taking a Good Photo

- [Rule of thirds](#) – the human eye will be drawn to the top, bottom, and left third, so try to include something interesting in one or more of these areas of the photo
- [Try different distances, times of day](#) – try taking the same photo at different distances and times of day to see how the subject might take on different hues or change focus

Writing a Good Caption

- Tie a climate change: rising temperature and sea levels, more extreme droughts and flooding, increasing air pollution, shifting animal and plant communities, etc. to something of value in the photo, and if possible, how actions of the student and / or the community today or later could make it better. Keep the caption short, no more than a sentence or two, and focused on highlighting some aspect of the photo itself to draw the observer to connect to the photo in the way the student feels about the subject.